

# ➤ Recommendations: **Leveraging Lead Service Line Replacement for Workforce Inclusion and Growth**

The following recommendations present a framework for delivering more equitable, efficient, and effective lead service line replacement (LSLR) across Illinois.

As LSLR initiatives roll out statewide, there is an unprecedented opportunity to align infrastructure development with broader goals of workforce diversity, inclusion, and community engagement.

Whether by promoting the use of apprentices, mandating hiring from disadvantaged communities, or integrating community outreach efforts, these recommendations seek to foster

long-term workforce development and strengthen local economies. By implementing these strategies, Illinois can transform its LSLR program from a public health necessity into a model for inclusive economic growth, community empowerment, and the development of a sustainable, skilled workforce.

## FUNDING

Recommendation: Increase Funding for LSLR	
Actor	Action Step
Illinois General Assembly	Dedicate funding for LSLR to enable more contracts, more hiring, and more opportunities to bring new, diverse talent into the LSLR workforce.

## **CONTRACTING**

<b>Recommendation: Implement Block-By-Block Contracts</b>	
Community Water Supplies	Complete LSLR block-by-block when possible to create economies of scale and more opportunities for apprentices to participate in the work.

<b>Recommendation: Embed Inclusion in Bid Documents</b>	
Community Water Supplies	Include all diversity and inclusion goals in bid documents to ensure these are fundamental to project requirements.
Community Water Supplies	Include in project contracts requirements for utilizing small, minority-owned, and women-owned businesses, veteran-owned businesses, and businesses owned by persons with a disability (henceforth referred to as D/M/WBE and VOSB firms) to promote broader participation and access to LSLR contracts.
State of Illinois	Require that D/M/WBE and VOSB firms are utilized as subcontractors or prime contractors, ensuring equitable access to LSLR contracts.

## **HIRING FROM DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITIES**

<b>Recommendation: Hire from Disadvantaged Communities</b>	
State of Illinois	Mandate that contractors and subcontractors hire women and individuals from socially and economically disadvantaged communities, as defined by publicly funded workforce programs such as the Climate Works Pre-Apprenticeship Program and Illinois Works.
Community Water Supplies	Ensure that hiring practices align with requirements in subsections (n) and (o) of the LSLR and Notification Act pertaining to good faith efforts around utilization of D/M/WBE and VOSB firms.

## **ACCESS TO TRAINING AND EQUIPMENT**

<b>Recommendation: Support D/M/WBE and VOSB firms</b>	
State of Illinois	Support D/M/WBE and VOSB firms in competing for contracts by providing training in bidding, project management, and business operations.
Community Water Supplies	Facilitate access to training and support programs for D/M/WBE and VOSB firms, ensuring these firms can compete effectively for LSLR contracts.

## UTILIZATION OF APPRENTICES

<b>Recommendation: Integrate Apprentices into LSLR Projects</b>	
State of Illinois	Encourage the integration of apprentices into LSLR projects as feasible.
Community Water Supplies	Encourage the integration of apprentices into LSLR projects as feasible.
Contractors	Work closely with State-funded pre-apprentice training providers to source and hire candidates, maintaining collaboration to meet diversity and equity goals.

<b>Recommendation: Reduce Barriers to Participation in Apprenticeship Programs</b>	
State of Illinois	Provide funding and support to help individuals from disinvested communities overcome barriers to participation in pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs.

## COMMUNITY OUTREACH

<b>Recommendation: Coordinate Community Outreach</b>	
State of Illinois	Provide dedicated funding for Community Outreach Coordinators based on contract size.
Community Water Supplies	Establish roles for Community Outreach Coordinators on each LSLR project to act as liaisons.

## **SUPPORT AND OVERSIGHT**

<b>Recommendation: Track Progress in Meeting Goals</b>	
State of Illinois	Provide support to project owners to track and report on the success of contractors in meeting diversity goals.
Community Water Supplies	Convene regular meetings with contractors and training providers to monitor progress toward diversity and equity goals, including conducting regular check-ins and unscheduled site visits, and adjust strategies as needed.

<b>Recommendation: Promote Opportunities Statewide</b>	
State of Illinois	Promote and provide information about LSLR opportunities statewide, focusing on 1) reaching contractors in smaller communities, especially D/M/WBE and VOSB firms; 2) publicizing distant opportunities for firms willing to travel.